

Observations & Findings

Summarized below are our major observations and findings. Many additional observations can be found in the “Literature Summaries”, “Good Ideas”, and “Survey” sections of this report.

THREAD TO THE FUTURE...

The USACE Strategic Vision (Vision) has provided a thread which we can follow to the future. However, the journey that the Vision leads us on is not an easy one. The size, diversity, and embedded culture of USACE has made our first steps laborious and slow. Like a train when it begins to pull away from the station, we have spent a great deal of energy to move a relatively small distance. All of our cars are not moving at the same speed and occasionally we spin our wheels. We have made a lot of noise, vented a lot of steam, belched a lot of smoke, but we are moving and moving in the right direction.

“Time and experience have verified to a demonstration, the public utility of internal improvements...But yet it is folly to undertake works of this or any other kind, without first knowing that we are able to finish them--as half finished work generally proves to be labor lost.” -- Abraham Lincoln

As the train begins to move, the engineer and the brakeman must make adjustments. These adjustments do not alter the course of the train, but makes the train move more smoothly and efficiently. Likewise we must adjust our business methodology to match the increased maturity of our Corps relative to project management.

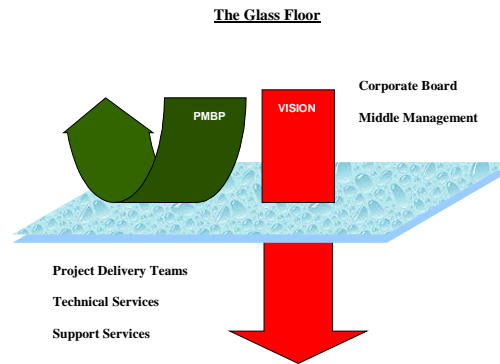
The Vision has been and still is the principle force for change in USACE. The Vision has spread both horizontally and vertically in the organization. For example, we made an unplanned visit to Bonneville Lock & Dam and a part-time student employee at the visitor’s center knew of the Vision. The most important principle of good leadership is being able to clearly communicate goals and expectations to subordinates. The content and marketing of the Vision has accomplished this. A job well done.

“The PMBP is like a big bank of white fog.” --- Interviewee

Knowledge and adoption of the PMBP is another story. Few USACE employees knew of the ER. Some thought it vaguely familiar after we described it or recalled that they think they read it when it was first released. The sad fact is only two employees, out of over 500, answered our twenty dollar challenge to recite the eight imperatives. One was a representative from construction and the other a project manager (PM). When asked if anyone could recite just one of the imperatives, many still could not. Most were unfamiliar with the term and with its source document. Most of the survey respondents did not believe the ER was related to their job. Most thought the ER was only for people in Programs and Project Management Division (PPMD).

"You can not change the direction of the wind but you can change the direction of your sails" --- Team Member

The PMBP has been plagued by three glaring deficiencies: weak marketing, non-uniform implementation, and lack of effective tools. The Vision had a systematic campaign plan, a glossy brochure, was well made, directly distributed, and had a great deal of command attention. The ER looks, smells and tastes like every other regulation ever produced. Nothing sets it apart from the rest. It has had a great deal of command attention, unfortunately, this attention was largely uncoordinated and directed at the executive level. People have not read the ER because ERs are usually narrowly focused at specific technical areas, and people assume that an ER entitled "Program and Project Management" applies only to PPMD. This has inhibited many technical and support staff from fully understanding and feeling part of the process. It is evident from the interviews that the ER would be better known and understood if it had been marketed to the workforce like the Vision. The title of the ER and the process it describes needs to be clear, concise and recognized as applicable to all USACE elements.



"The ER is written like the Wall Street Journal. It should be written like USA Today" --- Interviewee

There have been no coordinated strategic, campaign or operational plans to implement change toward the PMBP. The lack of a coordinated plan, further compromised by the lack of a unified command and staff structure in USACE, has resulted in a chaotic PMBP evolution which has resulted in disinformation, misinformation and confusion at all levels. The PMBP, as described in the ER, is the way we do business. It promotes cutting across internal functional walls to provide seamless and integrated life cycle service to our customers. If it is not understood widely, we must change the way we communicate it. Our Corps has been blessed with intelligent, hard working, dedicated Americans who want nothing more than to serve our nation. Yet many are frustrated because they are in the mist of a process they do not fully understand.

We have policies, such as the Operations Manager letter (CECW-O/CECW-B Memorandum, 2 March 1998, Subject: Operations, Regulatory, and Emergency Management), which are in direct conflict with the ER. We have regulations which are worthless unless accompanied by decades of altering guidance. The time has come to freeze all USACE policies in order to realign our doctrine, techniques and procedures so they are focused on the execution of a mission by a project delivery team (i.e. a project matrix organization).

"PROMIS was suppose to empower and enable, instead it has hindered and crippled." -- Interviewee

Unless the PDT and Resource Managers (this term refers to all individuals tasked with managing labor, schedules, and/or funds) are given the required tools to tactically implement the PMBP, the marketing and implementation plans are nothing more than pretty pieces of paper. There is no gentle way to put this, PROMIS is a failure. We need to admit it and move on. Our investigation has revealed two primary faults with PROMIS: it is little help to the PDTs and it's user interface is substandard.

PROMIS was intended to be a force multiplier. However, consistently in the interviews we heard that PROMIS is a force divider. It does not help the PDTs manage projects nor does it help middle managers level resources. In many cases districts have hired contractors to load and sustain PROMIS for no other purpose than upward reporting. PROMIS needs to be replaced with a common commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) system, developed by a PDT for PDTs. Its interface needs to be consistent and user friendly. In addition, interviewees remarked that existing AIS systems should not be discontinued until the new ones are known to work.

ALIGN FOR SUCCESS...

USACE has a divided organizational philosophy. On one hand, we claim to be a highly decentralized organization. On the other, we centralize key parts of our organization. Nothing is wrong with this approach so long as communication channels are clearly maintained. If these channels are not maintained the responsiveness and effectiveness of USACE, like any other organization, will degrade. It is important to understand that there are only two communication channels in the military: command or staff. Uniformity in command and staff organizations at all echelons of the military facilitate these communication channels. The organizations are designed to be modular and flexible so that a force can be quickly constructed to meet changing mission requirements while retaining consistent communication channels. Our civilian management structure is not uniform nor is it responsive to changing environments. The command and staff channels often are disconnected, and on occasion, run counter to one another when compared to the efficiency of military units.

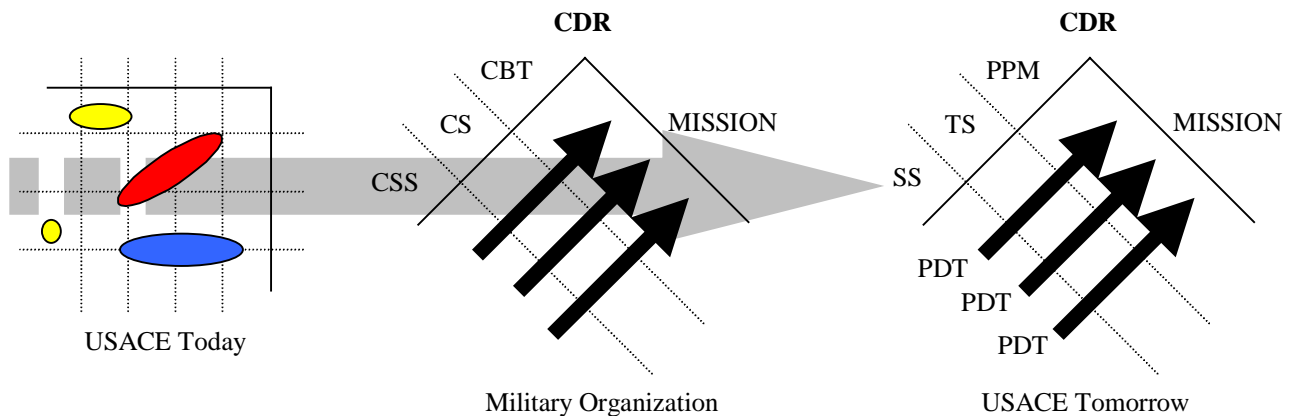
The USACE-PDP command channel needs to be simple and clear. It starts with the PDT (lead by the project manager), goes through the district commander to the division commander and ends with the Chief of Engineers. All other coordination is staff coordination. Staff officers (chiefs) have supervisory and management authority, but only within their particular staff organization and only for issues relating to policy, procedure, and administration. Command and control of mission execution rests solely in the command channel.

The project delivery team (PDT) is the fundamental unit of USACE-PDP. All work must be accomplished using the USACE-PDP and the PDT model. All structure

and process must stand on a PDT foundation. Building on this common element will allow synchronized and integrated command and staff structure to be developed at all echelons. This will allow us to be a project matrix organization that is aligned to support the PMBP regardless of the differences in organizational structure between Commands.

"You are on a PDT, support a PDT, are training, or are on leave." -- Team Member

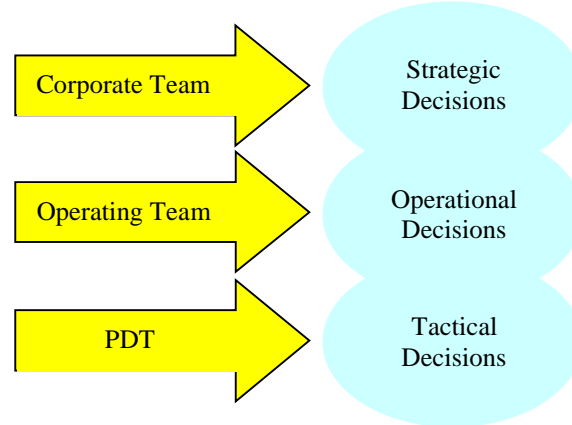
In the military, you are either engaging in a mission or training for a mission. Likewise, all USACE employees should be on a PDT, on training, or on leave. In addition, the Army is organized into three primary groups: combat (CBT), combat support (CS), and combat service support (CSS). Each of these groups have certain roles and responsibilities and each is essential in order to successfully engage and overcome a



threat. Units or individuals from each group are assembled to create the proper force mix to meet mission requirements. The USACE civilian organization should parallel this military task structure. Combat Arms are those units which maneuver to directly engage the threat. For USACE, these are the project managers who are directly engaged with our customers/clients. Combat support units are force multipliers to the combat arms. In USACE, these are the technical services (engineers, scientists, planners, and realtors) that directly comprise the PDT. Combat service support are all the other units, that are critical for success, but do not directly increase combat power. In USACE, these are the support services (LM, IM, HR, RM, CC, CT, etc) that keep the internal processes of the organization running. Just as in the military, all three groups are needed to be successful. There needs to exist a complementary relationship and mutual respect between these groups in USACE (i.e. true teamwork). Regardless of their position in the organization, contributions and "buy-in" from the entire team is needed for success.

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it" is the slogan of the complacent, the arrogant or the scared. It's an excuse for inaction, a call to non-arms."
-- GEN Colin Powell

From our site visits we have observed that those districts/centers that have clear roles and responsibilities for decision making operate more effectively. Using a three tiered decision making matrix comprised of PDTs, an Operating Board, and an Executive Board provides the appropriate checks and balances for PMBP decisions without redundancy, overlap or hindering the empowerment of the PDT. As the military task structure will facilitate command and control within USACE, a three-tiered decision making matrix will clearly define the division of labor within each echelon. The PDT is the first level of the matrix. It is comprised of a PM and the appropriate mix of technical and support staff and it is charged with mission execution. The operating board is comprised of selected middle managers whose primary function is to corporately run the day-to-day business of the command. Lastly, the corporate board is comprised of the Commander, Military Deputy Commander and selected senior leaders. This team acts strategically to place the command in the best possible position for the future. This matrix fosters cross-functional teamwork and unit cohesion. When we found this type of matrix during our field visits, we saw a more integrated and synchronized command.



Not being in the command channel does not mean that one can abdicate their responsibilities. Each team member has a responsibility for the quality of their individual products. If a PDT can not agree that a quality or safety issue is being properly addressed, they must elevate the issue to the next higher level in the command channel. The Commander has the ultimate responsibility for quality and safety. It is the staff 's responsibility to ensure that all appropriate levels of command know and understand all relevant quality and safety issues.

Besides using the middle managers on the operating board to directly run the day-to-day business of the command, every group interviewed found them to be important and needed. More than once they have been described as “the glue which holds the whole thing together.” They do most of the supervising, reviewing, mentoring, and resource leveling that takes place. They comprise the vast majority of our corporate knowledge and are critical to producing quality work, at a fair price, and in a timely manner. Our interviews and survey results indicated that the PDTs are far too busy to take on the role of the middle managers. We were asked to define the role of middle management: they are the glue, the backbone, they are essential!

YOU GO, WE GO...

Too often during our day-to-day business we forget about the important contributions of those we are not directly engaged with, and who produce quality work behind the scenes. Although we constantly receive the benefits of their service, much of

the time we fail to appreciate it. We are referring, most directly, to our support services. Too many times the term “support” is inferred to mean “less than.” This could not be farther from the fact. The role of support services is in no way inferior or less applicable to the project delivery process than the other USACE groups. Support services must be included as a full USACE team member by supporting the PDT and using the PMBP.

It is important that all USACE components are represented at the command level. However, we have observed that individual support service offices often have a chair on the corporate board. This creates a numerical imbalance with the program and project managers, and the technical support elements. All of the support service offices should be represented and lead by the Deputy Commander.